

Middletown Open Space & Fields Committee

Minutes of Meeting

November 19, 2014

A meeting of the Open Space & Fields Committee took place on Wednesday, November, at 5:30 p.m. in the Community Room of the Middletown Police Station, 123 Valley Road, Middletown, Rhode Island. The meeting was called to order by Nick Coogan, Vice Chairman

Member Present: Cheryl Boergesson, Lisa Cinquegrana, Nicholas Coogan, David Kirchner, Austin Prendergast, Mike Richards, Ed Sisk and Ralph Thomas

Members Absent: Mason Hawes

Ex-officio Members:

Present: Robert Johnson, Conservation Commission; Matt Sullivan, Planning Board Liaison

Town Officials: Present: Dick Adams, Town Council Liaison; Shawn Brown, Town Administrator; Will Cronin

Others Present: Five observers

Agenda

Old Business:

- Properties Updates.**

o Report of Boulevard/Tibbets Recreation Facility Steering Committee. Dick Adams and Mike Richards reported that the committee had completed its work and submitted its report. The report indicates that, as was intended when the property was acquired, the property should be used for active recreation, but, in the Phase I implementation that the use be limited to playing fields. The planned usage had been reviewed by the Aquidneck Land Trust and determined to be consistent with the conservation easements. The report also indicates that 22 acres will be devoted to growing corn. There will be no access to/from Mitchells Lane and permission still needs to be obtained from the owner of the property at the intersection of East Main Road and Oliphant Lane to gain access for entry/exit at the light at that intersection.

During the discussion that followed, including in response to questions from the visitors, it was observed that the report represented only a recommendation from the committee and there were many steps required before it would be implemented. These included Town Council review, which could modify or reject the recommendations. If approved, detailed planning would need to be done and then funding provided. It was indicated that this could possibly require a lengthy period.

o The Valley Trails. Shawn Brown reported that the RI Department of Environmental Management (DEM) had eased its regulations applying to farm property used for passive recreation, which would allow walking trails to be constructed in the Valley. \$185,000 is available

for this work, which would permit the Department of Public Works to construct approximately 2 1/2 miles of 6"-gravel trails. The Tree Commission, working with the Town administration, is developing trail locations. When complete, DEM approval will be required before work can begin.

o Other Parks. Will Cronin reported that Shawn Brown, Mike Stahl and he had visited all the parks to identify needed capital projects. He will comply a list of those projects and provide it at a future meeting. As a separate matter, the value of the park steward program was noted and that the three stewards had been found when the committee visited the parks and neighbors were invited to meet with the committee. It was suggested that those visits resume in the spring.

• Purgatory Walkway/Vista Improvement Update. Ralph Thomas reported that the trail had been constructed on the non-roadway side of the guardrail. It begins at the Purgatory Chasm parking lot and proceeds down the hill to the area where the memorial benches are located. The Town administration was commended for its extensive and effective work in coordinating with and obtaining the approval of the various RI state agencies involved.

New Business:

• Proposed Agenda Items for December Meeting.

- o Properties Updates**

-  Tibbets/Boulevard Steering Committee**

-  The Valley Trails**

- o Review Capital Project Listing (Will Cronin lead)**

- o Review Shoreline Park Application**

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 6:50 PM. The next meeting will be on Wednesday, December 17, 2014 at 5:30 PM in the Community Room of the Middletown Police Station, 123 Valley Road, Middletown, Rhode Island.

Ralph Thomas

Recording Secretary